

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated September 3, 2003, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the above claim amendment and the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,160,877 to Tatchell et al. ("Tatchell"). Applicants have herein amended claims 1, 4, 11, 13, and 19. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections as follows.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to claim, in part, the steps of "connecting a call from the caller to the callee" and "receiving an instruction from the callee to block future calls from the caller to the callee." Applicants submit that Tatchell does not teach, among other things, such steps.

Tatchell discloses a method of screening and prioritizing an incoming call. In Tatchell, call screening is accomplished based on pre-set options that are stored in a subscriber database. *See* Tatchell, col. 18, lines 34-60. For example, when a calling line ID ("CLID") is detected from a caller that has been pre-identified as a nuisance caller, a personal agent plays a pre-recorded message to the caller. *See id.*, col. 19, lines 2-5. Also, in Tatchell, the personal agent may place certain incoming calls on hold and allow the callee to direct the disposition of the incoming call. *See id.*, col. 19, lines 28-67. The callee may answer the call or direct the personal agent to play a "screen" or "block" message to the caller. *See id.*

Thus, the method disclosed in Tatchell does not "connect[] a call from the caller to the callee" and "receive an instruction from the callee to block future calls from the caller to the callee" as claimed in independent claim 1. Instead, in Tatchell call blocking options are pre-set

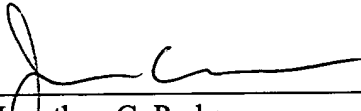
in a database, and the callee only has limited options with respect to disposition of future calls from a caller in which an incoming call to the callee has been connected.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that independent claim 1, and dependent claims 2-10, which depend therefrom, respectively, are in condition for allowance. For analogous reasons to those recited above in connection with independent claim 1, Applicant submits that independent claims 11, 13, and 19, and dependent claims 12, 14-18, and 20, which depend therefrom, respectively, are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for the pending claims in the present application. If the Examiner is of the opinion that the present application is in condition for disposition other than allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below in order that the Examiner's concerns may be expeditiously addressed.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan C. Parks
Reg. No. 40,120

KIRKPATRICK & LOCKHART LLP
Henry W. Oliver Building
535 Smithfield Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Tel. (412) 355-6288
Fax (412) 355-6501